

Response 4

Advocacy, Thy Name is Provocation!

Instructions to prepare this text were to be provocative and in that spirit I hope the following remarks encourage and validate: encourage us to look beyond the confines of the Library walls as a sphere of engagement and validate successful initiatives. Some of the examples come from Latin American Studies, my area of work for the last 24 years, but they can apply to other subjects/areas.

Earlier this summer, our Stanford group of Area Studies and Humanities/Social Sciences bibliographers participated in an ongoing cross training program: the Library Concierge Project (LCP; <http://creativelibrarypractice.org/2013/06/06/the-library-concierge-project-at-stanford-university/>). In that meeting both groups showcased a broad range of activities of involvement: collection development, reference, outreach, etc. Some of the issues raised at that presentation are also applicable at this forum: foreign language acquisitions, ebooks, and outreach.

Foreign language acquisitions. When presenting a chart with Library holdings detailed by language in our OPAC, one of the LCP attendees asked why Spanish language titles were not much higher. I thought that would be my provocative opportunity to advance the cause of Latin American collections. But a week later the *Chronicle of Higher Education* beat me to any provocation, even when advocating my point, with the headline: *Is Europe Passé?* (endnote 1)

As "new sources of funds for research and exchange focus on countries outside of Europe," the immediate implication for our libraries is a challenging proposition, logical for some, provocative for others: revise traditional budgetary allocations to reflect changing academic programs and research priorities. In some cases this may mean limiting historical strengths to focus on newer areas, not a simple/easy choice/answer, but something that we need to address.

E-books. At the Global Dimensions (<http://www.crl.edu/events/8478>) meeting of 2012 (precursor to the present conference), a detailed survey of e-book presence outside the United States was documented. As expected, it's an uneven landscape, with Europe and Japan in the lead and other areas such as Africa and Latin America with a less developed digital output.

And now for my most provocative and perhaps equally emphatic point that must be presented in all caps: FOREIGN LANGUAGE E-BOOKS ARE NOT THERE YET! In the case of Spanish language e-publishing, Spain is ahead with 22% (endnote 2), yet for Mexico, the second largest publisher; it's not even 1%! The higher figures for Spain can be deceiving as NOT ALL that content is appropriate for an academic library.

I repeat: FOREIGN LANGUAGE E-BOOKS ARE NOT THERE YET, and I hope that provosts, presidents, chancellors, directors, deans...understand that we are far from reaching the point where foreign language e-books can replace our print collections.

For this emerging area of e-books, librarians within SALALM (Seminar in the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials; <http://salalm.org/>) have been actively working with e-book vendors. During the last four SALALM annual conferences a very well attended panel has provided an engaging discussion with tangible outcomes in two areas: re-think pricing formulas and influencing what content to add. Similar presentations to publishers in Latin America at two major book fairs (Guadalajara and Buenos Aires) have been successful in having publishers from Chile, Argentina and Mexico move into the digital realm and sign agreements with US-based providers.

Outreach. In talking to colleagues from SALALM and WESS (Western European Studies Section; [http://wessweb.info/index.php/Introduction to WESS](http://wessweb.info/index.php/Introduction_to_WESS)), there is a sense that although a broad range of outreach activities are taking place, they just may not be on the radar screen of provosts, presidents, chancellors, directors, deans.... There are many worthy projects, with a few examples that come to mind and illustrate this engagement:

Albany's Jesus Alonso Regalado uses social media to interact with users (<http://www.slideshare.net/jesusalonso/alonso-regalado-makingbookfairsfriendlier>) and "takes them with him" on an acquisitions trip so that they feel part of the process of building their Library collection.

Wisconsin's Paloma Celis Carbajal was a key player in organizing a Conference (<http://www.library.wisc.edu/cartoneras/>) that not only showcased the Library's collection of handmade cardboard chapbooks from Latin America but also brought those alternative publishers to a scholarly meeting in the United States.

Africa South of the Sahara (<http://www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/guide.html>) by Stanford's Karen Fung is perhaps the best known online bibliography of resources for the region.

Stanford's John Eilts's Middle East Political Sites Project (<http://webarchives.cdlib.org/a/MidEastPolitics>) captures and archives web sites by/about political organizations and related NGOs from the Middle East; while UNC Chapel Hill's Mohamed Hamed incorporates library use into the classwork by introducing students to primary source content in his class from the Languages Across the Curriculum (<http://areastudies.unc.edu/lac/>) series.

These efforts have been carried out by individual librarians and provide a valuable service to users. I am certain that other area studies specialists lead similar engaging projects.

Return on Investment (ROI)

This text could not be complete without a reference to the value of libraries (or the trendy term of ROI, which my boss has taken head-on more eloquently than I could: How ROI Killed the Academic Library [<http://chrisbourg.wordpress.com/2012/12/18/how-roi-killed-the-academic-library/>]).

Worth mentioning here is the case of JSTOR, which is probably one the most used and best known academic databases with a broad user population at all levels. For Spanish language content, SALALM librarians not only worked closely with JSTOR and ARCE (<http://www.arce.es/>; an association of Spanish cultural journals) in suggesting what to include but also reassured the latter that "the American group" represented a bona fide project. The immediate ROI of that collective effort was not easily quantifiable in the short term, as the digital content was added over a period of several years. Nowadays we could not imagine JSTOR without such robust foreign language content.

Visibility as Investment

In addition to the outreach efforts noted above, there is one other space for area studies to explore: re-enforcing and/or renewing presence within ALA (American Library Association; <http://www.ala.org/>). While area studies librarianship has developed successfully outside the main library association, there is a broad constituency of information professionals with international studies collecting whose only professional outlet is ALA. At SALALM we discovered that through our ALA-Affiliate (<http://www.ala.org/groups/affiliates/affiliates>) status we could have a discounted rate for a booth at ALA's annual conference and have taken advantage of that benefit.

This ALA-SALALM partnership has also provided a venue to offer a webinar (<http://salalm.org/2012/04/28/may16webinar/>) aimed at those new to Latin American Studies librarianship. It was a very successful program with 44 participants that served as both an outreach tool and as a fundraising activity for the organization. A logical next step would be to have more in-depth session at ALA similar to a workshop held at the SALALM 2010 (http://library.brown.edu/salalm2010/pre_conference2.html) conference.

Something to consider as a potential workshop at ALA would be to host a day-long event on area studies librarianship for the non-specialist in several subjects for which there is a demand. We know that for Latin American Studies the interest exists. Funding is always an issue (meeting space is at a premium around ALA conference time) and would require partnering with an entity that can lend meeting facilities as a contribution-in-kind and/or co-sponsor.

What have you done for me lately?

As we move to claim a more visible place for our libraries and area studies librarianship, highlighting our active role in projects recognizable to our users is one way to advance that cause. The outreach activities of individual subject specialists also enhance that process. If fostering global citizenship is a desirable outcome in our institutions of higher learning (**endnote 3**), creating those learning spaces implies a continuous investment in acquiring international research materials that meet those needs, whether print or

digital, locally held or accessed remotely. What better way to highlight value and return on investment.

* Many thanks to Stanford, SALALM and WESS colleagues for their suggestions.

Endnotes

1) McMurtrie, Beth. "Is Europe Passé?" *Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 29, 2013) <http://chronicle.com/article/Is-Europe-Pass-/140589/>

2) Spain's Agencia ISBN reports that in the 1st half of 2013 (<http://www.europapress.es/cultura/>) e-books represented 20% of the total publishing output. Mexico's figures indicate that less than 1,700 titles were published in 2011 (<http://www.caniem.org/archivos/estadistica/Indicadoresbooklet2011.pdf>).

3) Olds, Kris. "Creating global citizenship—What are we talking about and why does it matter?" *Inside Higher Ed* (March 11, 2012) <http://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/globalhighered/global-citizenship-%E2%80%93-what-are-we-talking-about-and-why-does-it-matter>